

Biographies of Kentucky Board of Education Members

Grayson R. Boyd

Grayson R. Boyd is a retired educator with 38 years of experience in the Paintsville Independent and Johnson County school systems. He has been a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, instructional supervisor, and director of pupil personnel. Grayson received his bachelor's from Morehead State University, masters from the University of Virginia, and Rank I certification from Morehead State University. He has served on the boards of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky Association of Secondary School Principals, and Kentucky Association of Academic Competition. Grayson lives in Williamsport with his wife, Diana, and has three children and seven grandchildren.



Ben Cundiff

Ben Cundiff is a chemical engineer and an attorney with more than 46 years of experience in Kentucky and Tennessee. Ben holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and law degree from Vanderbilt University. Cundiff serves on the boards of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Fund for Transformation of Education in Kentucky, Kentucky Governor's Scholars Foundation, Jackson Financial Corporation (Mayfield), Community Foundation of Christian, Todd and Trigg Counties, Trigg County Imagination Library, University Heights Academy (Hopkinsville), Nashville Symphony, Martha O'Bryan Center (Nashville), Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, two Nashville charter schools and the Gatton Academy for Math and Science and Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University. He lives in Cadiz and has two grown children.



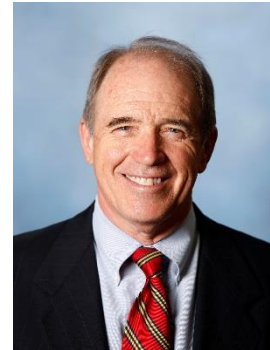
Rich Gimmel

Rich Gimmel is chairman of Atlas Machine and Supply, Inc., in Louisville. He is a staunch advocate for students, has mentored inner-city students and his company runs an aggressive apprenticeship program for student machinists. He helped found the Greater Louisville Chapter of KY FAME, fostering innovative workforce training through apprenticeship-style work-study. Rich previously had a 20-year career in broadcast news. He holds a bachelor of arts in psychology from Georgetown College and an MBA from Bellarmine University. Gimmel serves on the board of the National Association of Manufacturers and is a former board member of the Louisville Urban League. In addition, he volunteers as executive director of the Kentucky Race Track Chaplaincy. Rich and his wife, Angela, live in Louisville and have grown children.



Samuel Hinkle

Samuel (Sam) Hinkle is an attorney at Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC. He resides in Shelby County. Sam is a graduate of Washington and Lee University and Yale Law School. He has previously served on the Shelby County East Middle School's Site-Based Decision Making Council. He also served for more than 10 years as a member and chair of the Shelby County Board of Education. Sam has four children, all of whom are graduates of the Shelby County School District, and is himself a graduate of the public schools in Shelby County.

**Gary W. Houchens**

Gary Houchens is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership and Research at Western Kentucky University. He teaches graduate courses in educational administration, advises graduate students, maintains an active research agenda, and chairs and serves on students' doctoral advisory committees. Previously, he served as a principal, assistant principal and middle school social studies teacher. Houchens holds a doctorate degree in educational leadership from the University of Louisville, a master's degree in teaching from Oakland City University, and a master's degree in history and bachelor's degree in philosophy and religion from Western Kentucky University. He lives in Bowling Green with his wife, Holly Payne, and has two children.

**Robert King (Ex Officio Member)**

Robert (Bob) King is president of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and by statute serves as a non-voting member of the board. He received his bachelor's [degree](#) from Trinity College and a [Juris Doctor](#) degree from Vanderbilt University. At CPE, Bob has led statewide efforts to collaborate with K-12 education, has focused campus attention on student success, and is encouraging significant reform in teacher and principal training. He serves on the Executive Committee of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), is the former Chancellor of the State University of New York and has served as president and CEO of the Arizona Community Foundation. He and his wife, Karen, have four children and [two grandchildren](#).



Alesa G. Johnson

Alesa Johnson is the Chief Officer Workforce Solutions at Somerset Community College. She collaborates with local economic development boards, postsecondary institutions and the K-12 schools to recruit business and industry and coordinates workforce training efforts. Alesa has more than 11 years of experience coordinating and facilitating educational initiatives in the 13-county Cumberland region of Kentucky. She also has extensive engineering and management experience in chemical and off-shore production operations for ExxonMobil. Johnson received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in higher education from the University of Louisville. She and her husband, Stephen, live in Somerset and have two children.

**Roger L. Marcum**

Roger L. Marcum retired from public education after 34 years and as executive vice president of St. Catharine College in January 2014. He earned his bachelor's degree from Berea College and his master's, Rank I and superintendent certification from Eastern Kentucky University. Roger is a Prichard Committee member and volunteer for Tri-County United Way. He also is past president of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky Association of School Councils and the Council for Better Education. Roger and his wife, Bobbie, have two children and four grandchildren.

**Nawanna B. Privett**

Nawanna Barton Privett was a teacher, principal and central office director in Fayette County for 25 years. She also served as a distinguished educator, director of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, and first state director of the Kentucky Leadership Academy and CEO Superintendents' Network. Currently, she is the facilitator for the Kentucky Education Action Team (KEAT). She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees and Rank I from the University of Kentucky. She is an elder at Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church, a member of the UK College of Education Board of Advocates, and a board member for Women Leading Kentucky. Nawanna and her husband, Dr. George Privett, have five children and five grandchildren.



Milton C. Seymore

Milton Seymore is known as a steadfast advocate for all children to have equal access to a high-quality education in Kentucky. He retired from Ford Motor Company following a 29-year career there. Milton has been active in the Jefferson County community as chairman of the Justice Resource Center, helping to promote community economic justice and to eliminate discriminatory economic practices, and serves on the Board of Directors for Kentucky Youth Advocates. He graduated from the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff with a bachelor's degree in philosophy. In addition, Seymore is an alumnus of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and currently serves as pastor of Energized Baptist Church in Louisville. He and his wife, Sherry, live in Louisville and have two children.

**William L. Twyman**

William L. (Bill) Twyman is a semi-retired educator and works part-time with Educational Directions of Louisville. He taught math and science in the Glasgow Independent school district and served in administration as a principal and in the central office. He was among the first educators in Kentucky to receive the Milken Educator Award (1993). Bill did his undergraduate work at Campbellsville University and George Peabody University and earned a master's and a Rank I at Western Kentucky University. He serves on the Western Kentucky University Advisory Board and the Glasgow Community Medical Care Board and is a member of the Glasgow Kiwanis Club. Bill and his wife, Lou Frances, have four children and seven grandchildren.

**Mary Gwen Wheeler**

Mary Gwen Wheeler of Louisville is executive director of 55,000 Degrees, a multi-sector partnership focused on improving education attainment. Previously, she served in Louisville Metro Government as the mayor's senior advisor for Education and Youth and cabinet secretary for Health and Family Services and spent ten years in project management, strategic planning and development with the National Center for Family Literacy. She received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's from the Yale School of Management. Mary Gwen volunteers as a board member of the National Center for Families Learning, the Data Quality Campaign, the University of Louisville Community Partnership and Board of Overseers and as a Prichard Committee member. She and her husband, David A. Jones, Jr., a local school board member, have two grown children.



Stephen L. Pruitt, Commissioner of Education

In September 2015, the Kentucky Board of Education unanimously voted to hire Stephen L. Pruitt as Kentucky's sixth commissioner of education.

Commissioner Pruitt came to Kentucky with an extensive background in standards, assessment and accountability at the local, state and national levels.

He started his education career as a high school chemistry teacher in Fayetteville and Tyrone, Georgia. He later served as the science and mathematics program manager and director of academic standards with the Georgia Department of Education. Subsequently, he was named associate state superintendent for assessment and accountability and ultimately chief of staff for the Georgia Department of Education.

Most recently, Pruitt served as senior vice president for Achieve, Inc., a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C.

Commissioner Pruitt holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from North Georgia College and State University, a master's degree in science education from the University of West Georgia and a Doctorate of Philosophy in chemistry education from Auburn University.

Pruitt and his wife are the parents of two children. Their son attends the University of Colorado-Boulder; their daughter is a high school senior and attends public school in Kentucky.

